

Water Conservation

The summer of 2002 was brought our region a record drought. Wouldn't we all like to avoid a drought this summer?

At this point, our future is a little uncertain. We have had enough rainfall to recharge our surface water. However, because surface water levels rely mainly on rainfall, 3 or 4 weeks of dry weather could cause us to run short again this year. Our ground water sources (underground aquifers) have not completely recharged. According to the USGS, it may be a few years before those aquifers to recharge.

No one wants to endure another drought like last summer. So....

...What can you do?!

In the Kitchen...

- Run the dishwasher only when full.
- Run your garbage disposal only when necessary.
- Wash vegetables and fruit in a basin. Use a vegetable brush to remove dirt.
- Don't use running water to defrost foods. Plan ahead.

In the bathroom...

- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Install low-flow showerheads. Leave those that are installed in proper working condition.
- Never use the toilet as a wastebasket. The average toilet uses about 2 gallons of water each time it is flushed.
- Place a water displacement device in the tank so that it does not interfere with the working mechanisms in the tank. A capped plastic bottle filled with water, rocks or marbles or even a brick works well.
- Consider taking a shower rather than a bath. Limit showers to five minutes. If you must take a bath close the drain on the tub BEFORE you start running the water and fill the bathtub only HALF full.
- If you insist on taking a bath, use that bath water to water your plants. You can also use dishwater.
- Make sure that your bathtub drain plug doesn't leak. Replace the plug or plug washer if necessary.
- Don't overfill only to force the unneeded water into the overflow drain.
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In the laundry...

- Run the washing machine only when full and adjust the water level accordingly.
- Pre-treat stains to avoid rewashing.
- Use the shortest wash cycle for lightly soiled loads.
- Check your clothes washer hoses regularly for cracks that could result in leaks.

Everywhere...

- Report dripping, leaky faucets, spigots, showerheads or hydrants immediately.
- Install low-flow aerators on faucets to reduce the flow. (Be sure to remove your aerator periodically to clean the particles that may have collected in the screen. Low-flow aerators are not recommended for use in conjunction with PORTABLE dishwashers.)

Outside...

- Don't use water to clean pavement or driveways. Use a leaf blower or even a broom.
- Follow the Fort Bragg watering schedule and guidelines.
- Add compost or mulch to beds to help retain water.
- Raise lawn mower cutting height. Longer grass blades help shade each other and cut down on evaporation.
- Select drought-resistant or drought tolerant plants for outdoor planting.
- Remember the one-inch rule. Established lawns and shrubs, as well as most vegetables and flowers, need just one inch of water a week. If there has been an inch of rainfall during the week, you don't need to water at all.
- Soaker hoses get water to the roots where it is needed without wasting water.
- Cover those wading pools when not in use. It will reduce evaporation.
- Use a rainwater gathering system to catch rainfall and condensation from dew to use to water plants both indoors and outdoors.
- If you plan to store rainwater for any length of time a tight-fitting cover is essential to prevent evaporation, mosquito breeding, and to keep debris and critters from fouling the tank.

For more information about...

Conservation

<http://www.h2ouse.net/index.cfm>

Cisterns

<http://www.kingspanec.com/category/northernireland/www.tyrrelltanks.co.uk/tyrcat31.htm>

Sustainable Landscaping

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hgarden-index.html>

<http://www.bewatersmart.org/plants.html>

<http://www.greengardener.org/susprin.html>

http://ipmwww.ncsu.edu/urban/horticulture/res_landscaping.html

Droughts

NC Division of Water Resources

http://www.ncwater.org/Water_Supply_Planning/Water_Conservation/

NC Drought Monitoring Council,

http://www.ncwater.org/Water_Supply_Planning/Drought_Monitoring_Council/